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Information and communications technologies for development

Letter dated 24 February 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the outcomes of recent high-level meetings and working sessions on information and communications technologies for development which resulted in the launching of the Global Business Incubator (see annex).

The aforementioned meetings and working sessions were held prior to and during the current session of the General Assembly and considered issues related to South-South and triangular cooperation and ICT for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and involved participation and support from the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Benin, Cape Verde, the Comoros, Kenya, the Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan, as well as the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Development Programme Special Unit for South-South Cooperation and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and with additional support from South-South News.

I would be most grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 16.

(*Signed*) John W. **Ashe**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

12-26556 (E) 190312

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Annex to the letter dated 24 February 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Harnessing information and communications technologies for development: introduction of the Global Business Incubator

1. On 23 September 2011, during the high-level segment of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, a meeting was convened, under the auspices of the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, W. Baldwin Spencer, and with participation of heads of delegation, representatives of Permanent Missions, the private sector and civil society, at the headquarters of South-South News in New York. Participants highlighted the importance of information and communications technologies (ICT) for development in the Caribbean region and, specifically, the need for a Global Business Incubator, to harness the potential of small businesses through ICT and through greater access to global markets.

2. Participants highlighted the importance of the work that is ongoing in harnessing the potential of ICT, including through the establishment of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development, and the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels (see Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/16). Of particular note was the need to harness the potential of ICT to promote achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, through sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, a fact that was reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 66/184.

3. The meeting also took note with appreciation of the report of the Broadband Commission, prepared in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, entitled "A 2010 leadership imperative: the future built on broadband", and the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003, and endorsed by the General Assembly, and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005, and endorsed by the Assembly.

4. Participants also considered the outcomes of a series of high-level working sessions, at the ambassadorial level, held in April 2011, which focused on South-South and triangular cooperation in ICT for the Millennium Development Goals. These sessions were held in Hong Kong, China, and Beijing, with representation from the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Benin, the Comoros, Cape Verde, Kenya, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and Tunisia, as well as the United Nations Development Programme Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

5. The following recommendations came out of the high-level working sessions in April 2011:

- Actions taken to promote sustainable economic growth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals should build upon the principles set out in the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and the agenda set by the Broadband Commission, as well as other ongoing United Nations-related ICT processes
- Accelerate the development and deployment of technologies, including through South-South and triangular cooperation, and through the creation of such facilitative mechanisms as the Global Business Incubator, so as to harness the potential of ICT for sustainable economic growth and job creation, particularly in developing countries
- Immediately launch the Global Business Incubator as a facilitator for Governments and the private sector in building the capacity of developing countries to leverage innovation and creativity in achieving the Millennium Development Goals

The Global Business Incubator

6. The Global Business Incubator will serve as a facilitator for Governments and the private sector in building the capacity of developing countries to leverage innovation and creativity in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Core objectives of the Incubator include the creation of jobs and economic growth through sustainable development and urbanization.

7. The Global Business Incubator will promote the open exchange of ideas and active collaboration, while ensuring the privacy and quality facilities needed to operate in a professional and efficient corporate environment. The initiative will connect ambitious and energetic start-ups with seasoned veterans in a setting that promotes mentorship and innovation.

8. The global focus of the Global Business Incubator ensures that effective collaboration among Incubator participants, regardless of national origin, will produce innovative products and services which possess true international appeal. The Incubator is designed to provide cost-effective access to the most promising markets around the world.

9. The Global Business Incubator will also foster and encourage global initiatives in specific business sectors. Target areas include sustainable tourism, sustainable cities, renewable energy, clean technology, fashion and culture, digital media and film, ICT and e-Government.